
The Analysis of Understanding Sentence Final Particle ‘Yo’ by Japanese Learners

Hana Nimashita

Japanese Language Education, Faculty of Education and Teacher’s Training,
Riau University

Email: hana_nimashita@yahoo.co.id

Abstract: This paper investigates the Japanese sentence-final particles ‘yo’ as they occur in conversation and the equivalent of ‘yo’ in Indonesian using by Japanese Education students of Riau University. By using theory of sentence final particles presented by Masuoka (1992). This research is a qualitative descriptive research with translation of sentence-final particles ‘yo’ from imperative, information and invitation sentences as main data. The result of this research are as follows: first, most of students can not distinguish the function of sentence final particle ‘yo’ in imperative, information and invitation sentences. Second, the needs of learning improvement in sentences final particle especially in grammar and conversation lectures to teach the differences of sentences final particle functions.

Keywords: sentence final particle *yo*, translation, imperative, information sentence, invitation sentence

1. Introduction

The use of sentence-final particles or in Japanese called *shuujoshiin* conversation cannot be avoided in conversation because the sentence-final particle could express speakers attitude toward what he said to the hearers so that communication would be understood by hearers so that the use of sentence final particle in Japanese are important. Sentence final particle has a relationship between language and socialization as Ohta that language is a part of the socialization process, language socialization being both socialization through language, as well as socialization to use language appropriately (Ohta, 1993:6; Ibrahim, et al., 2018; Syafar, 2018). About the term of socialization here, Ohta (1993:6) defines as the process by which a person becomes a competent member of society, a process which takes place through interaction, as knowledgeable members and novices, whether children or newcomers, interact with one another. The relationship between language and socialization is not an issue concerning only first language (L1) acquisition, it has just as much importance on second language (L2) acquisition.

According to Cook (1988:129) sentence final particle ‘yo’ has a direct meaning and indirect meaning. The direct meaning of ‘yo’ is pointing to speaker’s utterance, and the indirect meaning are 1) assertive attitude, 2) speech acts include warning, advice, instructions, announcements, explanations, report, request/command, insistence, contradiction, and 3) social relations include higher status, knowing party. Masuoka (1991) said that ‘yo’ reveal the speaker’s “communication attitude”, or the speaker’s attitude toward the on going communication. In communication, speaker uses ‘yo’ to point to and present a certain utterance to the hearer, with

the implication that the information he or she conveys is his or her personal understanding or perception. For example could be see below.

- 1) *Watashi atama ga itai yo.*
“I have a headache.”

In the above example, the use of ‘yo’ means the speaker intends to accomplish through the utterance, ‘I have a headache’ are asserting, complaining, and eliciting the hearer’s sympathy, which are all grounded on the disparity of understanding between speaker and hearer. Sentence final particle ‘yo’ also could use to express imperatives and prohibitions especially to soften the utterance as seen in example below.

- 2) *Ikinasai yo.*
“Please go.”
- 3) *Iwanaide yo.*
“Please don’t say.”

In the above example ‘yo’ in imperative and prohibitions makes the command sound softer than just ‘*ikinasai*’ and ‘*iwanaide*’ that has strong command meaning.

Moreover, Masuoka (1992) said that ‘yo’ basically work to makes attention to what others do not know. Therefore, depending on circumstances, it represents various meaning such as mere notification/information, attention, and warnings. The example of notification/information meaning could be seen below.

- 4) *Saifu ga ochimashita yo.*
“Your wallet has fallen.”

And the example of attention and warnings meaning could be seen below.

- 5) *Motto benkyou shinai to, shiken ni ochiru yo.*
“If you don’t study more, you will fail the exam.”

From the example above it could be understood that speaker used ‘yo’ in utterance to express certain meanings to hearer as Masuoka (1991:95) said that speaker and listener assume a judgement and information mismatch. In sentence 1-4 above, speaker and hearer has a different information about the event, so that speaker confirms the judgement and information to hearer with ‘yo’.

In Indonesian, sentence final particle that often used in imperative and prohibitions sentences is ‘*dong*’ as seen below.

- 6) *Pergi sana dong.*
“Please go.”

The use of sentence final particle ‘*dong*’ make softer rather than sentence “*Pergi sana*” without ‘*dong*’. Kridalaksana (1989) has explained about sentence final particle in Indonesian. In an information sentence, sentence final particle ‘*lho*’ used by speaker to confirm a proposition as seen below.

- 7) *Aku juga mau, lho!*
“I also want to!”

In example 7 above ‘*lho*’ means that speaker confirms to hearer that the actual situation is he or she might have expected.

Besides that particle ‘*lho*’ also has means to emphasises it and asserts that is true (Sneddon, 2006:124). Particle ‘*lho*’ is almost written ‘*lho*’ although it was pronounced *loh* or *lo*.

8) *Tapi lama-lamaan ngajar tuh jenuh loh!*

“But when you’ve been teaching for a long time you get fed up with it!”

According to Sneddon (2006:130) sentence final particle ‘*yuk*’ is often used in invitation sentence, to urge the listener/hearer to do something together with the speaker. It usually occurs after the proposition as seen below.

9) *Kita pergi yuk.*

“Let us go.

The function of sentence final particle ‘*yo*’ in Japanese are very diverse as explain above, so that Japanese learners in Japanese Education Department of Faculty of Education, Riau University experience difficulties in mastering sentence final particles especially ‘*yo*’.

This research aims two goals: (1) investigating Japanese learners ability to translated sentence final particle ‘*yo*’ into Indonesian, (2) discovering the cause of misuse of translated sentence final particle ‘*yo*’ in Indonesian.

2. Methodology

The present research is descriptive qualitative research based on the questionnaire conducted on 56 third grade of Japanese learners in Japanese Language Education Department of Faculty Education and Teachers Training, Riau University. The learners were given six Japanese sentences with particle ‘*yo*’ and they has to translated into Indonesian so that the equivalent of ‘*yo*’ can be explain in Indonesian.

1. Classifying particle ‘*yo*’ translation by learners.
2. Describe the equivalent of ‘*yo*’ in Indonesian.
3. Calculate the frequency of equivalent of ‘*yo*’ in Indonesian.
4. Conclude the findings.

3. Result and Discussion

The analysis result of questionnaire consisting six items of two imperative sentences, two information sentences, and two invitation sentences that contains particle ‘*yo*’ to 56 Japanese learners in Japanese Education Department, Riau University is summarized in table 1 below.

Table 1. Result of Translation of ‘*yo*’

Data	Equivalent Particle ‘ <i>yo</i> ’ in Indonesian									
	<i>ya</i>	<i>-lah</i>	<i>lho</i>	<i>mari</i>	<i>yuk</i>	<i>ayolah</i>	<i>kok</i>	<i>dong</i>	<i>tentu saja</i>	<i>baik</i>
1	21	7	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	-	10	-	1	30	1	-	-	-	-
3	-	3	-	-	14	-	9	1	1	1
4	1	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-
5	4	-	-	4	32	-	-	-	-	-
6	7	-	-	10	29	1	-	-	-	-

Among 56 learners not all of learners translated particle 'yo' into Indonesian especially in data number 4. Here are the Japanese sentences in the questionnaire and analysis of learners translation.

Data 1) *Motto ii ko ni natte yo.*

“Be a better child.”

Particle 'yo' in imperative sentence above is translated into 'ya' by 25 learners, meanwhile 'yo' in imperative sentence in data 2 translated into 'yuk' by 30 learners.

Data 2) *Ike yo.*

“Please go”

In data 2 the addition of particle 'yo' in imperative sentence aims to soften speaker command to hearer. According to Kridalaksana (1989) particle 'ya' in Indonesian used to request confirmation or to express a mild order. Based on Kridalaksana's statement particle 'yo' in imperative sentence has equivalent with 'ya' in Indonesian. From 56 learners 21 or 37,5% have adequate understanding of 'yo' in imperative. However, in data 2, 30 learners or 54% match particle 'yo' with 'yuk'. In Indonesian, particle 'yuk' is used to invite hearer to do something together, so that the use of 'yuk' in imperative sentence is not appropriate. From the interviews it was found that learners misunderstood the meaning of command verb 'ike (go)' means speaker give a command to hearer to do something. From the error of translating command verb 'ike (go)', it is shown that learners have not been able to distinguish command and invitation verb form in Japanese.

Further discussion is about 'yo' in information sentence that show in data 3 and 4.

Data 3) A: *Ashita Rina san no tanjoubi paatii ni ikimasuka.*

“Will you go to Rina's birthday party tomorrow?”

B: *Ikimasu yo. Rina san ni purezento o agemasukara.*

“I will go. I will give a gift for Rina.”

In data 3 above, particle 'yo' occur in information sentence means speaker intends to emphasize information that hearer do not know. Particle 'yo' in data 3 translated into 'yuk' by 14 learners or 25% of all respondents. According to Sneddon (2006), particle 'yuk' in sentence means to urge hearer to do something together with speaker, whereas in the data 3 'yo' means emphasize information from speaker to hearer. Therefore, 'yo' in data 3 is not equivalent with 'yuk'.

Meanwhile, in data 4, particle 'yo' that means emphasizes information from speaker only translated by 9 learners, and only 4 learner or 7% of respondents can translated into particle 'kok' that equivalent with 'yo' in data 4.

Data 4) A: *Are? Konna tokoro doushitan desu ka?*

“Hei? Why you in a place like this?”

B: *Uchi wa kono chikaku desu kara yo.*

“Because my home is just around here.”

In sentence above, 'yo' is used by speaker as an emphasizing particle, as same as particle 'kok' that assert emphatically that the statement is true. Among the all data collected

from respondents, data 4 is the least translated data. From the results of the interview it is known that learners experiences difficulties to find the equivalent 'yo' in Indonesian. Particle 'yo' in data 5 and 6 appear in invitation sentence, that express the desire of the speaker to invite hearer to do something together as seen below.

Data 5) *Mou 5 ji desuka. Sorosoro kaerimashou yo.*

“Is it already five o'clock? Lets's go home soon.”

Data 6) *Yamada san wa nyuuin shite irundesu. Omimai ni ikimashou yo.*

“Mr. Yamada is in the hospital. Let's go for visit him.”

In Indonesian invitation sentences, particle 'yuk' is often appear in ending sentence or apperars at the beginning of the sentence. Particle 'yuk' can appear a number of times in the same utterance for emphasis. In data 5, 32 learners or 57% can translated 'yo' into equivalent particle 'yuk'. It means that learner can understood the sentence meaning and the function of 'yo' in data 5. Meanwhile, particle 'yo' in data 6 translated into 'yuk' by 29 learners or 52% of respondents, and 10 learners translated into 'mari'. In Indonesian 'mari' often use in invitation sentence express speaker invitation to do something together, but 'mari' is not sentence final particle because 'mari' can stand alone rather than attached to the word.

4. Conclusion

After analyzing the data, it was found that students' understanding of the sentence final particles 'yo' was still lacking. From the collected data, it can be seen that the problems faced by learners is the various function of particle 'yo'. To overcome the problem needs to be improved learning especially grammar and conversation lectures. In lectures, sentence final particle needs to be carried out because in Japanese daily communication sentence final particle play an important role to express the intent of the speaker.

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